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Text of Address of
THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
at the
CHICAGO "DINNER WITH IKE"
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Noted by J. J. G. I.
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This is a proud day in the life of this city, our Party and our nation. Seven and one-half years ago a great crusade was launched from this very hall to drive from our nation's Capital a discredited Administration and to elect as America's 34th President one of the truly great men of this century. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Never in the history of this nation has an Administration more magnificently realized the dreams and objectives of those who worked and voted for its election. For the achievements of those years, the American people will be eternally grateful -- the ending of one war, avoiding others and maintaining peace without surrender of principle or territory; unleashing our economy from arbitrary controls and encouraging and stimulating the creative enterprise of our people with the result that our nation's prosperity has reached an all-time high; and above all the restoration of the highest standards of honesty, dignity, and integrity in the conduct of the people's business by our national Administration in Washington, D. C.

Every American who joined that crusade can proudly say tonight that under the leadership of a great President and his Republican Administration the American people in terms of peace, prosperity and progress have enjoyed the best seven years of their lives.

Tonight we salute the man who gave our Party and our nation this inspired leadership. We do it by our presence here. We do it with the contributions that this dinner represents. But the finest tribute that we can pay to him is by pledging ourselves to carry on the crusade he has so splendidly begun, by working and voting for another great victory for the Republican Party and for the American people this November.

Incidentally, as you may have noted, some of the Democratic Presidential candidates took a somewhat different view of the President's leadership at their meeting in Washington Saturday night. They also had some things to say about me.

As far as I am concerned I don't think we need to be too worried about their comments, because if you think what they said publicly about me was bad you ought to hear what they're saying privately about each other!

However, since this is a salute to the President, I do feel it is appropriate for me to comment, at least briefly, on the constantly reiterated charge of our opponents that "Dwight Eisenhower has been a weak President -- what the nation needs is a strong leader."

His leadership does not need defense by me or by anyone else. But I would like to share with you some of the unforgettable personal experiences I have had in seeing the President in action during the last seven years.

I have seen him calmly and wisely make the decisions requiring action on Lebanon, Quemoy-Matsu and Suez.

I have seen him make the even harder decisions not to act and talk when a lesser man's rashness could have risked war. Courage is not always

shown by strong actions and brave words. Often it takes a far higher form of moral courage to be silent when talk may be harmful, and it takes both courage and judgment to choose a sound course in contrast to a spectacular course. I have often heard the President say in these difficult periods, "In a battle, give me a man who keeps his head when everybody else is losing theirs."

I have seen his magnificent sense of duty -- duty that three times brought him back to his desk after illnesses that would have put younger men on the sidelines -- going to Panama while still suffering intense pain from an operation -- traveling to Europe for the NATO Conference two years ago when even speaking was an intolerable strain.

I have seen him deal with Mr. Khrushchev's deft sallies graciously, but with unmistakable and masterful firmness.

And like any great leader he is at his best when the going is roughest. After our defeat in the Congressional election of 1958 when he was being written off as a lame duck President, he threw down the gauntlet to the spenders and with the help of a fighting, united band of Republicans in the House and Senate he saved the American people from billions of dollars in higher taxes and higher prices which the massive spending programs of his opponents in the Congress would have made inevitable.

Illinois Republicans can be proud tonight that Everett Dirksen's splendid leadership in the Senate and the united support of Illinois' Congressional Republican delegation contributed immensely to this magnificent achievement.

And there has never been a more eloquent answer to the charges of "American prestige is at an all-time low -- no leadership -- no sense of purpose" than the tumultuous welcomes the President received on his recent trip abroad. This was a personal tribute. But it was also a tribute to Dwight Eisenhower, the leader of the Free World, the living symbol of the greatness of America and its selfless dedication to the cause of peace and freedom.

If there is any further answer needed to the charges of no leadership, let me note one tremendous and revealing contrast between the campaigns of 1952 and 1960.

In 1952 the Democratic candidate for President couldn't run fast enough -- away -- from the sorry record of the Truman Administration which even he termed a mess.

In 1960, every Republican candidate will be proud to defend the Eisenhower record against all comers and to ask the American people to register their approval on Election Day.

With such an outstanding record, what do we have to worry about? The answer is that the very record which is our greatest strength is potentially our greatest danger. Because we have such a fine record there will be an understandable temptation to stand pat on what we have done, to be smug and self-satisfied about the past and to fail to meet the new challenges of the future. This attitude is not worthy of our Party. And what is infinitely more important, it is not adequate for the needs of the nation in these times.

We can and should be proud of our record. And let me serve notice right here and now that I intend to defend it with all the strength at my command against those who attack it. But, we shall look upon our record not as our ultimate achievement but as the solid foundation upon which to build even greater accomplishments in the future.

Why is America a great nation today? Because we Americans have never lived in the past. We are never content to rest on our laurels. We never like to settle for being second best in anything.

Let this be the spirit of our Party and our people as we enter the crucial year of 1960.

No Administration in our history had more reason to be proud of its record in domestic affairs, but we see exciting challenges in those domestic problems that remain unsolved.

We believe that overall the American educational system is the best in the world. But inadequate classrooms, underpaid teachers and flabby standards are weaknesses we must constantly strive to eliminate, always recognizing in the remedies we recommend that any Federal education program must not infringe upon State and local responsibility for and control of our school system.

We are proud that there has been more progress in the seven years of this Administration in the field of civil rights than in any Administration since Lincoln's, but we shall continue to work for constructive programs which will assure progress toward our goal of equality of opportunity for all Americans.

We are thankful that American agriculture is the most productive in the world and that our problem is one of surpluses rather than scarcity. But we believe there is no higher legislative priority than a complete overhauling of obsolete farm programs under which the prices farmers receive for major farm products continue to go down and the costs to the taxpayer continue to go up.

The fact that there are more jobs at higher wages available to Americans than at any time in history does not weaken our determination to develop effective programs in which areas of chronic unemployment can be restored to healthy, productive units of our economy.

The fact that as a result of our policies twelve million more Americans are covered by Social Security and that benefits are almost 50% higher than was the case seven years ago does not in any way slow down our drive to find ever more adequate methods for protecting the aged, the unemployed and the disabled.

And the fact that the American economy has never been more productive than it is today only encourages us to find more effective methods to deal with disputes between labor and management so that the public interest may be more adequately protected but without controls which would stifle the productivity of our free enterprise system.

I am sure that a question which may have occurred to you is this: Aren't all Americans for these objectives, including our opponents? The answer is yes, of course. What is the difference, then?

We Republicans have unshakeable faith that the way to achieve these goals is by the free choices of millions of individual consumers, by the productive efforts of free management and labor, and by local and state action wherever possible -- supplemented when necessary but not supplanted by the Federal government.

The philosophy of most of our opponents is just the opposite. They claim that the road to progress has to be paved with bigger government, more spending, and higher tax bills for the people to pay.

The record proves that our faith in freedom is well placed. Economic policies based on encouraging rather than stifling free enterprise get results -- they work. Because the fact is that for twenty years Democratic Administrations promised to give the American people the economic abundance and prosperity that the people, stimulated by seven years of Republican faith-in-freedom, have in great measure now achieved for themselves. And as long as they are left free of arbitrary controls, the American people will continue to achieve greater and greater abundance with fair shares for everyone.

Great as are our domestic problems, there is another which transcends them all -- our survival in the struggle which is going on throughout the world today.

There is no part of our record of which we are more proud than in the area of national security and the conduct of foreign policy. But we know that the challenge which confronts us continues to be massive in character. Because while Mr. Khrushchev and his colleagues claim they have ruled out the use of force as an instrument of implementing their national policies, they have never abandoned their goal of communizing the world. Their people are being driven to superhuman efforts to realize this objective and their leaders have notified us of their intentions.

What should our answer be?

Militarily our objective must be to maintain sufficient strength not for purposes of attack but to deter any potential aggressor. Questions have been raised as to whether we have now and will continue to have in the future strength of this magnitude.

We need constant examination and constructive criticism of our defense posture, pointing up our weaknesses where they exist. But constructive criticism is one thing; making America appear weaker than she is to potential aggressors is another. It is time to quit selling America short. We are not a second-rate country, with second-rate military strength and a second-rate economy.

Let's get these facts straight right here and now. No aggressor in the world today can knock out the deterrent striking power of the United States and its allies. This is the case today and it will continue to be so in the future. We know this, our political critics should know it -- and what is most important, Mr. Khrushchev knows it.

What should our policy in the future be? Because we are living in an age of rapid technological advances in military science we must submit our national security programs to a searching, month-to-month reexamination in the light of any new technological developments and of our best current estimates of the military capabilities of any potential aggressor. On the basis of these appraisals we must make such readjustments as are necessary to keep our deterrent power at adequate levels. And let us resolve once and for all that America has the resources and the will to maintain the absolute deterrent strength necessary for survival, whatever sacrifices may be required.

But the maintenance of military strength adequate to deter aggression, while absolutely essential for our survival, does not by itself meet the responsibilities of world leadership which are ours.

We must leave no stone unturned in our efforts to find some more effective guarantee against the terrible destruction of nuclear war than the mere maintenance of a balance of terror.

We must continue to follow the President's leadership in his willingness to discuss our differences at the conference table whenever there is a prospect for success; in his search for an effective formula under which we could reduce the burden of armaments and discontinue testing of even more destructive nuclear weapons; and in his steadfast devotion to the principle that the United States must take the leadership in substituting the rule of law for the rule of force as a method of settling disputes between nations.

Above all, we must recognize that the greatest danger we face is in the non-military rather than the military area. Millions of Americans heard Mr. Khrushchev on his recent visit to this country lay down his blunt challenge for peaceful competition between the Communist and the Free World.

What should our answer be?

We should make it clear at the outset that we welcome competition, provided both sides compete under the same set of rules and provided the competition takes place both in the Communist and the Free World. After all, competition is our idea. It is the motivating drive responsible for the economic, political and cultural progress of this nation. We are glad that Mr. Khrushchev recognizes its merits and we welcome his challenge.

Can we win in this competition? The answer is -- yes, if we recognize some basic factors.

We must avoid at all costs any over-confidence just because the Communist idea is repugnant to us or because of our belief that the Communist system has built-in weaknesses which will eventually bring about its downfall.

We must always remember that a totalitarian system, in the short run, can concentrate immense power on chosen objectives; that the Russian people are working long and hard under the driving direction of fanatically dedicated leaders who are motivated by but a single objective -- the communization of the world; that the leaders as well as the people have a highly-developed competitive spirit and that they have the advantage of anyone who is running behind in a race -- the stimulus of trying to catch up and pass the front runner.

We can win in this competition, in other words, if we recognize their strength and if we work harder, believe more deeply and are motivated by an even stronger competitive spirit than theirs.

But in recognizing the seriousness of their challenge, we could make no greater mistake than to go overboard and start to judge American institutions by the Communist yardstick.

They have a patent on the system of bureaucracy, government controls and government domination. But even they have found it necessary to modify their system by increasingly providing greater rewards for those who make the greatest contributions to their economy.

In other words, they are finding it necessary to turn our way. At a time they are turning our way, the greatest mistake we could make would be to turn their way.

Our answer to them, therefore, in the area of economic competition must not be more government spending and more government controls but stimulation and encouragement of the creative energies of millions of free peoples and of our system of productive private enterprise.

And we must not make the mistake of just meeting them on their chosen battleground. The answer to atheistic Communist materialism is not just more and better materialism.

To put it simply, they offer progress at the cost of freedom. Our alternative is progress with freedom -- and, in fact, progress because of freedom.

I realize that there are many who complain that the Communists have a sense of purpose which we lack. And there is no question but that they do have a sense of purpose -- that of imposing the Communist system on all the nations of the world.

We can certainly agree that we do not have this sense of purpose. Because, as the President reiterated over and over again on his recent trip, far from wanting to impose our system on other nations, we believe that all peoples must be free to choose the kind of government they want.

But the fact that we have no desire to conquer the world does not mean that our alternative to Communism is simply to leave the world as it is -- ignoring the misery, disease, and inequity on which Communism thrives. We, too, have a purpose and a mission in the world today -- and that is what we must make clear as we meet the Communist challenge.

We offer our partnership, our advice and assistance in helping peoples everywhere to achieve the economic progress which is essential if they are to have better food and housing and health than they presently enjoy.

But we do not stop here. We say, broaden competition between Communism and freedom to include the spiritual and cultural values that have especially distinguished our civilization and enriched our lives.

We insist that man needs freedom -- freedom of inquiry and information, freedom to seek knowledge, to express his views, freedom to choose his own leaders and hold them strictly accountable, freedom to shape his own destiny -- and above all -- freedom to worship God in the light of his own conscience.

Let our mission in the world today be to extend to all mankind not just the ideal but the fact of freedom -- by preserving and protecting and defending it, by helping others achieve it, by offering our own example of a free society at work.

This mission is not new. It is the heart of the American idea that goes back to the very foundation of this free Republic. It is the essence of the crusade launched here seven years ago and we can be proud tonight that our great President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, is its living symbol in America and throughout the world.